

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

'Close gap on lostness,' strategist urges

SHREVEPORT, La. (BP) — Trustees of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB), meeting March 8-10 in Shreveport, La., elected a new vice president for finance, received word of another vice president's plans to retire, and set aside \$4.5 million to advance the agency's global computer network.

They also appointed 63 new missionaries for overseas service and heard a challenge for Southern Baptists to focus more resources directly on the masses of people worldwide who are lost without Christ.

The 63 missionaries were appointed in a March 10 service at Broadmoor Church in Shreveport. An overflow crowd of more than 1,700 people listened as 27 couples and nine singles told how God called them to invest their lives in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

While God is moving powerfully among certain people groups, vast multitudes "have yet to hear the gospel because no one has said, 'I'll be the one to go,'" IMB President Jerry Rankin said during the service.

"These appointments tonight will bring us right to the edge of 5,000 missionaries worldwide," Rankin said. "Yet they represent only .03% of all Southern Baptists. Are these the only ones God is calling?"

Trustees elected David Steverson as vice president for finance and treasurer. A former missionary to Thailand, Steverson was the associate vice president who had served as interim vice president since the retirement of Carl Johnson in January.

Steverson, an Oklahoma native, worked as a certified public accountant before he and his wife Judy were appointed missionaries in 1986. He joined the IMB finance office in 1992.

He is the first chief financial officer in the board's 156-year history to come from the ranks of the missionary force.

"It's an honor and an awesome responsibility to do everything in my power to represent our missionary colleagues well," Steverson said. "I pledge to do my very best to see all the peoples of the world come to see who Jesus is and have a personal relationship with Him — and to pay the bills as we go along."

Don Kammerdiener, the board's executive vice president, informed trustees he plans to retire Sept. 30. Also an Oklahoman, Kammerdiener has served through the International Mission Board



CLOSE THE GAP — While God is moving powerfully among certain people groups, vast multitudes "have yet to hear the gospel because no one has said, 'I'll be the one to go,'" International Mission Board (IMB) President Jerry Rankin, a native Mississippian, said during a missionary appointment service March 10 in Shreveport, La. IMB trustees were challenged to focus more resources directly on the masses of people worldwide who are lost without Christ. (BP photo by Sandy King)

for almost 40 years as a missionary and administrator.

"It's a wonderful moment in life when you can draw a line and look back and say, 'I have absolutely no regrets about the way I've spent my life and my ministry,'" Kammerdiener said. "I announce this intention with nothing other than unreserved gratitude for the generous and unbroken support which I have received from this board and our president."

"My commitment is now and will remain unreservedly for this board and for the worldwide cause of missions. I will be forever grateful for the support I have felt from all of you."

The \$4.5 million trustees set aside to advance the agency's global computer network will complete nine projects that are part of the board's long-range plan for computer systems.

Among other things, those projects will:

- ◆ improve the board's ability to receive and publish prayer needs submitted by missionaries anywhere in the world;

- ◆ create computerized databases of the agency's extensive photographic, video, audio, and graphics archives;

- ◆ provide evaluation of the board's computer system by experts who can recommend ways to improve security; and

- ◆ standardize overseas accounting systems and simplify bookkeeping where multiple countries and currencies are involved.

A review of the Bold Mission Thrust goals Southern Baptists set 25 years ago reveal God has been at work around the world, said Avery Willis, IMB senior vice president for overseas operations.

Bold Mission Thrust challenged

Southern Baptists to give everyone in the world an opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel by 2000.

The emphasis called for almost doubling the number of missionaries to 5,000 and multiplying other statistical categories 10-fold.

"Bold Mission Thrust was not a plan but a vision," Willis said. "We knew God had to do it because we couldn't."

Trustees received a breakdown of progress on seven categories of Bold Mission Thrust overseas goals:

- ◆ Missionaries: 1975 level - 2,667; Goal - 5,000; Actual final total - 4,946; Increase - 85.5%
- ◆ Countries: 1975 level - 82; Goal - 125; Actual - 153; Increase - 86.6%

- ◆ Volunteers (annual): 1975 level - 1,200; Goal - 10,000; Actual - 30,362; Increase - 2430.2%

- ◆ Churches: 1975 level - 7,584; Goal - 75,840; Actual - 60,988; Increase - 704.2%

- ◆ Churches/Chapels combined: 1975 level - 18,489; Goal - 184,890; Actual - 99,282; Increase - 437%

- ◆ Church membership: 1975 level - 896,063; Goal - 8,960,630; Actual - 5,624,018; Increase - 527.6%

- ◆ Baptisms: 1975 level - 80,747; Goal - 807,470; Actual - 451,301; Increase - 458.9%

Southern Baptists should rejoice that last year their missionaries overseas reported a 24.1% increase in baptisms and a 16.7% increase in new churches, said David Garrison, IMB associate vice president for strategy coordination and mobilization, but they must not lose sight of the fact that billions of people are lost without hope in Christ.

Garrison briefed trustees on his Global Analysis Project (GAP), which contrasts the vision of taking the gospel to all the world's people groups with the stark reality that the great majority of people are lost — whether in the unreached "Last Frontier" or the nominally Christian world.

In a world where 90% of the population — perhaps 5.4 billion people — are lost without Christ, evangelical believers face an enormous challenge, Garrison said. The challenge is heightened by the fact that evangelicals aren't putting their missionary resources where the needs are greatest.

Half the world's lost people, Garrison noted, live in two of 14 regions identified by the International Mission Board: Central/Southern Asia and East Asia.

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

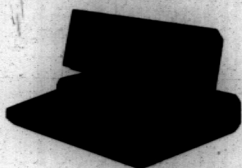
Kim speaks at SBTS

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Mississippi in 'good' company

In light of how we have allowed gamblers to take over Mississippi and remold the state in their image, it would be easy for Mississippians to think of themselves as the biggest suckers in the world.

While we are certainly among the front runners for that ignoble title, the competition is stiff. Take our sister state of Louisiana, for example.

When the state and city of New Orleans approved the siting of a single casino on Canal Street at the edge of the world-famous French Quarter, there was rejoicing among the gamblers and politicians.

Just like in Mississippi, the citizens of Louisiana and New Orleans were promised that no child would fail for want of a state-of-the-art public school system. New schools would be built from one end of the state to the other. Teacher salaries would be brought up to the mythical Southeastern Average.

The money would pour into state and city coffers at unimaginable levels. Harrah's, the eventual winner of the cutthroat race for the lone casino license, agreed to pay the state \$100 million each year that the casino was in operation.

Harrah's also pledged to limit their food service inside the casino, stay out of the hotel business, and refrain from competing with local retail businesses in other ways, even though they inexplicably constructed a second level that was never designed as casino floor space and has been largely vacant since the building opened.

Everyone would grow fat by taking advantage of the casino's many losers — the city, the state, the casino owners. Louisiana's reputation as one of the poor cousins at the family reunion would finally be over.

That was then. This is now. Harrah's New Orleans casino is presently in bankruptcy court. Thanks to the intricate and creative corporate shell game that allows Harrah's to dodge responsibility, the company is now in a position to dictate to the state exactly what it wants.

That's why Governor Mike Foster has convened a special session of the Louisiana Legislature to rubber stamp a bailout, even

though the mother corporation remains virtually untouched by the casino's financial house of cards.

The governor's plan would radically alter the original agreement with Harrah's, cutting their promised \$100 million payment in half, removing the restrictions on food service and hotel operations and — you guessed it — allowing that mysterious second floor to be used for retail shops.

Mississippi business owners could have told Louisianians that the goal of any casino operation is to get gamblers inside and keep them there, through cut-rate food, shopping opportunities, and bargain hotel accommodations.

That means gamblers won't be spending money with local merchants, and the economic balance of the city is about to be radically altered in favor of the big out-of-state casino owners.

All Harrah's had to do was promise the world, and then wait a few years to get everything they wanted in the first place. Starting to sound familiar?

Back to the political maneuvering — just in case the legislature was not in a generous mood, Foster also cut a deal with the casino in which he contractually obligated the state to Harrah's dictates.

The Times-Picayune newspaper in New Orleans hired respected New Orleans contract attorney Scott Willis to inspect Foster's deal with the casino. He was floored by what he discovered.

The newspaper explained in a front page

"O LORD, HELP ME TO SO LIVE
THAT WHEN PEOPLE OPPOSE
ME, IT MAY BE PERCEIVED AS
AN ATTACK ON CHRISTIANITY!"



article on March 14, "(I)f the governor, the gambling board, or the attorney general were to aid a challenge to the contract, then the state might be liable for damages and could be responsible for the casino's third-party obligations, such as paying creditors."

Not to worry, however. Foster's casino welfare program is sweeping through the Legislature at a lightning pace. A front-page photo in the March 15 issue of The Times-Picayune may explain why.

There, in living color, is Harrah's lobbyist Randy Haynie standing just off the floor of the Louisiana House of Representatives, watching the debate on the bailout bill and giving marching orders to a prominent legislator.

So take heart, Mississippi. True enough, we're suckers for a smooth con job, but apparently we're in good company.

As if that removes the disgrace.

GUEST OPINION:

Stop the persecution now!

By Denton Lotz, general secretary
Baptist World Alliance

Yevgeny was savagely beaten, first struck on the head with a stick, then beaten with the stick on his legs, hips, and shinbones. One of the agents sat on the brother as he was lying, while the other agent struck the soles of his feet with a stick. This continued for five minutes. After this the brother could not get up. The agents also struck him on the chest with their fists."

These reports are not from years ago in the gulags of the Soviet Union. These are reports today from Turkmenistan! Keston News Service (KNS) reports that this was the fate of the Baptist Yevgeny Protolov. Churches have been closed, public worship is forbidden, and believers are treated with great indignities by the government authorities and police of Turkmenistan.

These Baptist pastors had a Bible and the officers said "It is a forbidden book." The two pastors were interrogated by the secret police from 9 a.m. in the morning until 11 p.m. in the evening.

It was reported by KNS that

"The beatings continued for four hours. During all this time, both brothers were verbally assaulted with the most indecent expressions, pressuring them psychologically."

Many of the believers are being deported from their homes of many years. Not only Baptists but also Pentecostals, Adventists, and Lutherans also suffer as Christians. Other religions are also prohibited including Jehovah's Witnesses, Bahais, Hare Krishna, and Jews.

There are tough new religious laws being proposed in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Even in the Ukraine, which has a high degree of religious freedom, a Pentecostal church in

Vinnitsa has been attacked for its healing services to drug addicts. They were forced to halt what was called "the medical treatment of citizens at religious services until a receipt of a license from the Ministry of Health," also reported by KNS.

With the fall of communism and the Soviet Union, there was a hope of a "new world order" of peace and justice worldwide, but, indeed, instead of such a new world there has come a tragic "clash of civilizations," which is at root a conflict of religions! This phenomenon is not only in the Islamic former republics of the USSR, but all over the world.

What must we do? We must

first pray that God will protect and give courage to the suffering and minority group of believers. Secondly, we who live in freedom must work for their freedom.

Please write to your government authorities and complain about the treatment of Christians in Turkmenistan. Plead with your government to act for justice and peace!

Write to the United Nations. The BWA has written to the President of Turkmenistan, as well as to the United Nations, the USA president, and other government leaders protesting the lack of religious freedom! To be a follower of Christ means to bear one's cross (Mark 8).

It also is the assurance of the presence of Christ with us in our suffering: "They will deliver you up to councils, and flog you...for my sake...Do not be anxious...for what you are to say will be given you in that hour" (Matt. 10:17f.), and it is a responsibility for those living in freedom to protest and work for freedom of all in Jesus' name!

'Fish the Planet' nets over 1,000 professions

TYLER, Texas (BP) — "I've never seen this many churches come together," said R.J. Holt, one of three Southern Baptist youth pastors in Tyler, Texas, whose initiative has yielded more than 1,000 professions of faith.

Students from 137 congregations accepted Christ as Savior and Lord during a "Fish the Planet" outreach led by evangelist Ken Freeman Feb. 25-March 2 in the east Texas city.

"The most amazing thing has been the cooperation of the body of Christ," said Holt, minister of student ministries at Colonial Hills Church. "We reached more people in the course of a week than in all the things we've done before."

Next up: "Fish the Planet Too," two rallies in April and May also to be led by Freeman.

"I'm getting phone calls from parents saying, 'What have you done to my child?' and 'Thank you,'" said Kenny Cargill, associate pastor of students at suburban First Church of Whitehouse. "They talk about how things are different in their home because of this."

The "Fish the Planet" outreach began with a brainstorming session involving Holt, Don Allensworth of Green Acres Church, and Cody Bishop of Sharon Church.

Meeting last fall, they



THE BIG PICTURE — Evangelist Ken Freeman exhorts youth during a "Fish the Planet" outreach in Tyler, Texas, which stirred 1,000-plus professions of faith. (BP photo by Timothy Denton)

dreamed of reaching 16,000 teenagers in a 30-mile radius of the city, Holt said. The three decided to try a citywide "Disciple Now" weekend and challenge participants to invite friends to a youth rally the following week.

They enlisted 32 churches from 16 different denominations to hold discipleship weekends Feb. 23-25. The teaching came from "Share Jesus Without Fear," a book by Bill Fay published by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The 1,900 students involved in the discipleship weekend invited unsaved friends to attend the meetings featuring Freeman. His talks drew an average of nearly 2,700 a night, peaking at 5,900 the fourth evening.

Officially, counselors recorded approximately 960 first-time decisions for Christ. There were

another 340 decisions, primarily recommitments to follow Christ.

Cargill, who oversaw recording of names to make sure churches followed up with converts, believes many more didn't get registered.

"We're hearing constantly from kids who said they went forward but nobody has contacted them," he said. "We've had students coming from classes who say they've been talking to others who have accepted Christ, but nobody recorded their decision."

Cargill said 50% of the converts were students who had no previous church involvement. Of the 40 decisions linked to First Church, for example, 30 were invited to the rallies by church youth, he said.

Some were so eager they checked a box that they wanted to accept Christ and another for recommitment. They thought the latter meant being totally committed, Cargill said.

Church youth groups will be the key element in encouraging these new Christians to find fellowship within the body of Christ, he said. In addition to youth groups, members of school Bible clubs and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes

have been enlisted in the effort.

"One of the keys to Fish the Planet has been student involvement, students talking to their friends and helping reach them. It's going to take some time," Cargill said.

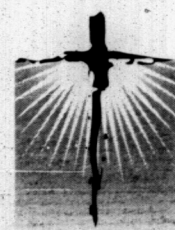
"Looking back, it's one of those things that's just sinking in," he added.

"Every week we hear about a new discovery, another student's decision, or meet another kid who was touched."

Bryan Timi, youth pastor at the nondenominational Grace Community Church, said Fish The Planet energized his group's spring break mission trip to New Orleans the week of March 12.

Forty students from Grace Community did street evangelism and other projects, such as serving dinner and cleaning at a homeless shelter.

"This one is more lively," Timi said.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

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FRONT PAGE

THE BAPTIST
Record

"Share Jesus Without Fear has given students a lot more freedom about sharing their faith. That really prepared us for this trip."

Students' testimonies from Fish the Planet are posted on the Internet at www.ftpstories.org.

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LifeWay best sellers

Top-selling books and music in LifeWay Christian Resources stores for March were:

HARDBACK

1. Prayer of Jabez, Bruce Wilkinson (Multnomah)
2. Fresh Power, Jim Cymbala (Zondervan)
3. Praying God's Word, Beth Moore (Broadman & Holman, trade publishing arm of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention)
4. Night Light, James Dobson (Multnomah)
5. My Utmost for His Highest, Oswald Chambers (Barbour)
6. Breaking Free, Beth Moore (B&H)
7. Grace for the Moment, Max Lucado (Countryman)
8. Experiencing God Day by Day - Devotional & Journal, Henry Blackaby (B&H)
9. He Chose the Nails, Max Lucado (Word)
10. Just Give Me Jesus, Anne Graham Lotz (Word)

PAPERBACK

1. Power of a Praying Wife, Stormie Omartian (Harvest)
2. Power of a Praying Parent, Stormie Omartian (Harvest)
3. Bad Girls of the Bible, Liz Curtis Higgs (Waterbrook)
4. Five Love Languages, Gary Chapman (Moody)
5. Boy Meets Girl, Josh Harris (Multnomah)
6. Experiencing God, Henry Blackaby (B&H)
7. Jesus Freaks, DC talk (Albury)
8. Case for Faith, Lee Strobel (Zondervan)
9. Case for Christ, Lee Strobel (Zondervan)
10. Sacred Romance, John Eldredge (Nelson)

Looking back

10 years ago

Nashville's Grand Ole Opry House is transformed into a cathedral as the words and music of All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name filled the hall at the unveiling of the new edition of The Baptist Hymnal. The event also marked the church music department's 50th anniversary.

20 years ago

Van Winkle Church, Jackson, commissions Rachel Milner on Sunday evening, March 8, to the Mission Service Corps. Milner, whose late husband Herman A. Milner was pastor for 33 years before his death in 1978, has volunteered for a year's service with the Home Mission Board in Oklahoma.

50 years ago

Southern Seminary joins Southeastern Seminary and New Orleans Seminary in admitting Negroes as regular members of the student body. Previously, a number of them had received instruction, but their studies were conducted either in the offices of professors or off-campus.

ALTAR CALL — An invitation to trust Christ is issued by Ken Freeman at the "Fish the Planet" youth outreach in Tyler, Texas. (BP photo by Timothy Denton)

BWA leader pleads for American revival

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — Problems such as teen pregnancy and school shootings will only be solved if Christians turn to God and pray for revival in America, Billy Kim said March 13 at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

girls become pregnant every year; and 100,000 high school students carry guns to school every day.

"America needs revival. American churches need revival. American Baptist churches need revival.

"Prayer is the premise to revival," Kim said. "The only way that God will send revival across the United States is [if] Christian people begin to take prayer seriously."

Kim told how God has sent revival to Korea, where many of the country's larger churches dwarf what are considered "mega-churches" in the United States. Kim said that the number of churches grew from 5,000 in 1955 to 32,000 in 1985.

During that time, the number of Christians increased from 1 million to 10 million. Kim said that the Christian population grows four times faster than that of the regular population.

The world's largest Presbyterian, Methodist, and Assemblies of God churches are located in Korea, with one particular church's membership totaling approximately 700,000, Kim said.

"Somebody asked me, 'What about Baptists?'" he said. "Well, you give us time. We're going to get there."

Kim, who was elected president of the BWA in 2000, said he is often asked about the spiritual health of the Korean churches.

"Why is the Korean church experiencing revival?" he asked. "Aside from the working of the Holy Spirit, I believe there [are] five criteria:"

◆ The Korean church has stressed the importance of prayer.

"Every morning, at 4:30 or 5 o'clock, you see most of the Korean churches praying," Kim said. "Furthermore, the senior pastor is asked to preach every morning. If you don't think that's a chore, you try [it] sometime."

◆ The Korean church preaches the Word of God.

"They're very conservative," Kim said. "They're preaching the Word."

Kim said he stressed the importance of a Bible-centered ministry during a meeting with Southern Seminary's Korean students.

◆ The Korean church stresses moral and theological purity among its members.

"Our churches must have a high standard," Kim said before adding that many of the churches in the United States could be confused for social clubs.

◆ The Korean church praises God in all situations.

Kim told how revival broke out in Korea in 1983, despite the fact that the nation endured two

tragedies. A Soviet fighter jet shot down a Korean Air Lines passenger plane, killing all 269 people on board. Later that year 17 South Korean delegates were killed by a bomb during a trip to Burma. It had been planted by North Koreans.

"Yet that year, Korean churches sold more hymn books than any other nation ... Even through all the sad circumstances we have faced, Korean Christians have learned to praise God in all the difficult circumstances," Kim said.

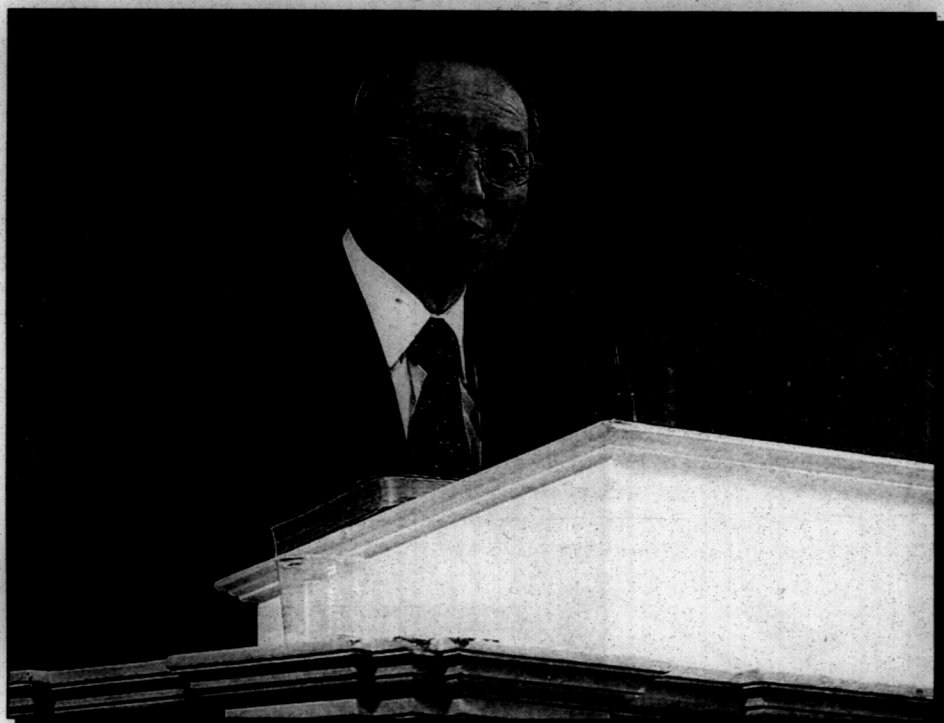
◆ The Korean church has endured persecution.

Kim said members of one Korean church made a point to sing *At the Cross* at their recent church dedication, because that same hymn was being sung when the church was destroyed decades earlier by Japanese occupiers.

During the church dedication — and during the singing of *At the Cross* — the Japanese delegation that had raised money for the new church stood up and walked over where the Korean delegation was sitting, Kim said.

The two delegations "embraced one another. They hugged another. They forgave and they forgot, because that's the power of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Chapel messages can be heard on-line at http://www.sbts.edu/news/audio/speakers_chapel.html.



Kim

BWA readies for move to new building

WASHINGTON (BP) — The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) is getting ready to move from its present building in McLean, Va., in suburban Washington to Falls Church, Va., five miles away.

To mark the upcoming change, the BWA held its March 5-8 executive committee sessions at Columbia Church opposite the building it soon plans to occupy.

In 1999, the BWA General Council in its Dresden, Germany, meeting, approved the purchase of a new home for the BWA.

"This new building will provide what the present one lacks," said BWA General Secretary Denton Lotz. "This includes enough space for existing and expanding ministries; a Baptist world library and prayer room; a media center; and a greatly improved conferencing facility to host Baptists from around the world."

The BWA already has sold its current building and the actual move is planned for April.

Established in 1905 in London, England, the BWA moved to Washington in 1943 ahead of the looming Second World War.

Kim, president of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) and pastor of the 15,000-member Central Church of Suwon, Korea, was on the Louisville, Ky., campus to speak during a Southern Seminary chapel service. Ten members of his church are students at Southern.

Kim used the text in Habakkuk 3:1-3 to speak about the need of revival in the world — and specifically in the United States.

"What America needs today is a generation of God-fearing mothers and fathers willing to kneel by the bedside and pray all night their wandering sons and daughters back to the fold of God," Kim said. "This nation needs revival. ...

"There is no other nation on the face of the earth that has been blessed by God as the people of the United States of America," he said. "Whether you like it or not, you're the world leader militarily, politically, and even religiously. Whatever you teach here, sooner or later it will influence our part of the world."

Unless Christians begin to pray for revival, Kim said, the moral decline in America will continue.

"Ninety-six percent of all Americans say they believe in God," he said. "Eighty percent profess to be Christians. Yet families are splitting apart in record numbers, countless unborn babies have been killed, and there are a hundred times more burglaries in so-called Christian America than there are in so-called pagan Japan."

Kim gave more statistics: a major crime is committed in America every 22 seconds; a murder is committed every 34 minutes; 125,000 high school

Heed people's distress signals, Lotz says

WASHINGTON (BP) — Like the rescue of U.S. pilot Scott O'Grady when his weak signal was picked up after he was downed over Bosnia in 1995, Anne Graham Lotz told more than 500 Baptists they need to listen to the many distress signals people send, however weak, and put them in touch with the Savior who can rescue them.

Lotz, a Bible teacher, author, and daughter of evangelist Billy Graham, spoke March 9 in the concluding session of the Baptist World Alliance's (BWA) March executive committee meeting, which focused on plans for the BWA to move in April from its present headquarters in McLean Va., a suburb of Washington, to Falls Church, Va., some five miles away.

Lotz praised the BWA, which she said "puts up signals around the world and puts people in touch with Jesus Christ," and she urged her audience to support the BWA and "pour everything you have into the work of those who put people in touch with the Savior."

Using the biblical story of Noah who obeyed God and built the ark of safety from the great flood recorded in Genesis 6, Lotz described Noah as an example of one who walked with and obeyed God while living in a wicked world.

"God's heart is just as broken by the wickedness of the world today as it was in the day of Noah," Lotz said, noting that God is warning the world through men and women who belong to him to share the gospel.

Lotz listed various things which break God's heart in a world "that does not compare with

God's standards. ... There is no righteousness, no truthfulness, no godliness."

Like Noah, who worked long years and faced unusual circumstances to build the ark, God is calling Christians to be at work, Lotz said. "Noah gave everything he had to the work," she said. "Everyone who walks with God works for God. You can't walk with God and be complacent."

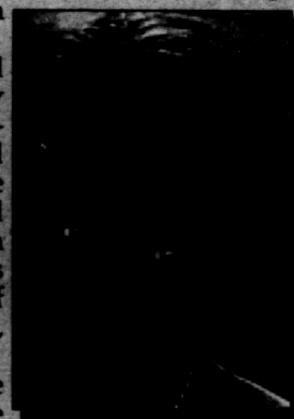
Lotz urged her audience to be obedient as Noah was. In collecting the animals, "God gave Noah an impossible task," she said. "We do the possible and leave the impossible to God ... and the truly impossible is to change anybody's heart and mind, as it is the Savior who does that."

Noah was also an example and a witness to what he believed when he entered the ark, and Christ's followers likewise must be witnesses for God even when people do not listen to what God says.

"In my life I serve the Lord because of God's call on my life, but also because of the example of my parents and grandparents," she said. "My grandfather got up at 4 a.m. every morning to pray and many times I saw him on his knees. This is also true of my mother. I saw my father not only preach to crowds, but share the gospel one-on-one."

In spite of being "politically incorrect" in his time, Noah walked with God "and we must do that too," Lotz said.

"Nothing you do is more important than your personal walk with God, obedient to his will and surrendered to his will. ... Then you begin to learn the mind of God. Judgment is on his mind and salvation is also on his mind."



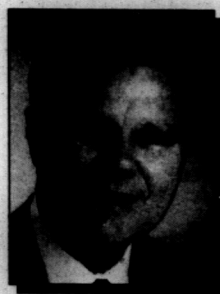
Graham Lotz

The Christian life is a race — sometimes delightful, sometimes draining, sometimes uphill, and other times downhill. At times the wind is to your back and at other times it is right in your face. The race is seldom easy but always moves us forward. Many of us have watched as folks started the race with excitement and energy, but fewer folks end the race that way.

It was early in the morning on March 13, 2001, that L. Gordon Sansing finished his course here on earth and began his day in a new place, the one the Lord Jesus had prepared for him.

It was an exciting life and a peaceful homegoing. He lived almost nine decades; many young pastors and Mississippi Baptists may not have known the giant who walked among us.

Although he was in failing health, Sansing continued to pastor Center Ridge Church in



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

DeKalb all the way to the end of the journey. His last hours were precious. Although he was neither always fully conscious nor cognizant of what he was doing, he would repeatedly invite everyone to stand for the benediction and sometimes then would lead in prayer.

When the end came, his precious companion of 65 years, Polly, held his hand, while on the other side his son Gordon H. Sansing, pastor of Forest Church, Forest, held his other hand. Then, he took his last breath here and took his first breath there.

Polly told me that when he stepped into the presence of

Jesus to see him face to face, she was holding his hand. What a beautiful picture that is as those whom he loved the most held his hand until he was actually in the hands of the one who loved him the most!

L. Gordon Sansing did so much, so well, for so long, that it is quite probable we will not see the likes of him again in our lifetime. He was a pastor, powerful preacher, effective evangelist, valuable denominational servant, loving husband and father, encourager, and friend.

He walked on the stage of life with grace and style among the biggest of men, but he was always amazed and wondered

why he was there. For those of us who were blessed to watch, we understood because we could see God put him there.

In a world where all too many servants of the Lord stumble or stop before they get to the end of the race, Sansing finished the course with the same vigor, strength, and joy that he had when he began.

For all of us who knew Sansing and had the privilege of running a part of the way with him, we are enriched by hearing the Gospel proclaimed, seeing the Gospel lived, witnessing the Gospel enjoyed, and now celebrating the Gospel complete!

Just hours before Sansing would leave this world for the next, he called his family to prayer and pronounced the benediction saying, "Lord, help our influence to be such that it will lead someone to know Jesus."

Truly, as his pastor Richie Davis indicated at his funeral, this prayer was answered many, many times throughout his life.

May it be true in each of us.

AB executive: stay focused during tough times

DALLAS (BP) — "Always focus on your objectives, not your emotions" and "Don't make impulsive decisions" are among "some very important principles of investing" cited

March 14 by Roddy Cummins, the Southern Baptist Convention Annuity Board (AB) executive officer for investment services, concerning the rampant downward turn in

stock prices that began March 9.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average plummeted 317 points March 14, 436 points on March 12 and 213 points on March 9, gaining back just 82 points March 13 and 57 points March 15. Sizeable losses also hit the Nasdaq and Standard & Poor's 500 Index.

Such losses are not unprecedented. Less than a year ago, the Dow Jones Industrial Average recorded its biggest one-week loss — 805 points in mid-April. When the Dow Jones dropped below 10,000 March 14, it stumbled to territory it had occupied just last October.

Cummins, in comments released to Baptist Press March 15, said, "While the Annuity Board is not in a position to give investment advice, we can remind participants and other investors of some very important principles that should improve their chances of being successful long-term in the financial markets."

Approximately 90,000 Baptist workers are building retirement accounts through the board.

Six pointers listed by Cummins were:

◆ "Always focus on your objectives, not your emotions. Remember the goals that you have established and the time frame that you have to invest. Objectives are established for times like these so that you can stick with a plan and not be concerned with the emotion that naturally exists in difficult market environments.

◆ "Don't make impulsive decisions," Cummins said. "Guard against making ad hoc changes in your portfolio. Making changes based on short-term market movements is almost a guarantee for failure as it promotes 'buying high, selling low.'"

Selling today cannot avoid yesterday's losses in a down market. Likewise, in an up market, you cannot buy yesterday's performance by investing in the hottest fund.

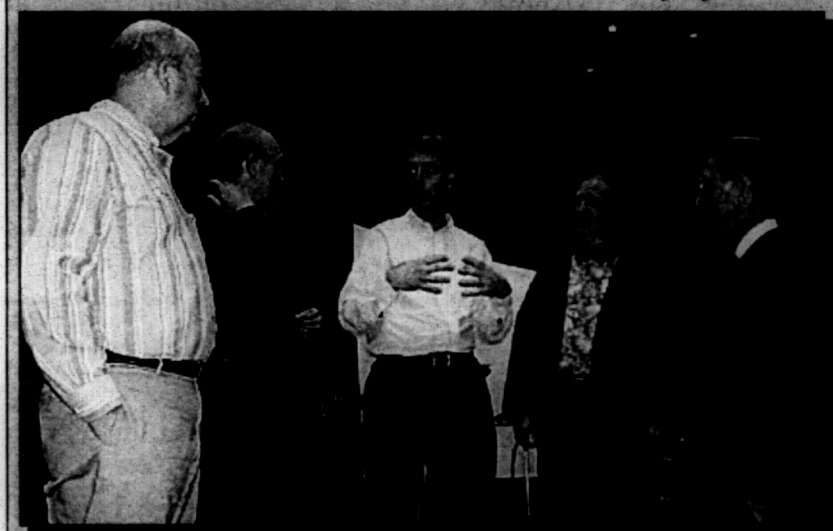
◆ "Maintain a proper perspective on your time horizon," Cummins said. Specifically regarding retirement participants, these assets are to serve needs for a long period of time. Make sure your objectives and actions are consistent with your time horizon."

◆ "Don't count your losses. Tallying up how much has been lost in your account serves no purpose. If you want to measure the progress/status of your investment account, focus on the large gains realized in the equity market over longer periods of time.

◆ "Maintain realistic expectations about market behavior," Cummins said. "Equity investments are by nature more volatile than other asset classes such as cash and bonds. This means they will move up and down over time. We have been through an unprecedented period of prosperity in U.S. financial markets."

◆ "Understand the benefits of diversification. While it may seem that asset classes run in concert with one another, a well-balanced and diversified portfolio that includes U.S. equities, non-U.S. equities and bonds does provide an excellent cushion in market declines," Cummins said.

Barna in Mississippi



Researcher George Barna (center) of Ventura, Calif., makes a point with a foursome of Mississippi Baptists who attended his February 22 conference at Ridgcrest Church, Jackson, on the future of church ministry in America. Talking with Barna after the conference were (from left) David McNair, member of First Church, Jackson; Kenneth West, Washington Association mission director in Greenville; David Westerfield, lay ministry pastor at First Church, Jackson; and John Perkins, Northwest Association mission director in Hernando. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD

by Fisher Humphreys and Paul E. Robertson,
paper, 0-914520-42-3, \$12.00

An informative guide for traditional Baptists who
are considering the claims of Calvinism.

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Luncheon, screenings offered at SBC

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Individual, marital, and family counseling, health screenings, and a luncheon program will be provided free of charge to Southern Baptist ministers and their families participating in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting and related conferences this June in New Orleans.

The complimentary services will be provided by LeaderCare and Wounded Ministers, ministries of LifeWay Christian Resources of the SBC. From June 11-13, experienced licensed therapists and pastoral counselors will conduct individual, marital, and family counseling for ministers and their families at no charge. Sessions will be in private locations and handled in total confidence. The daily newsletter for the convention, distributed at the Louisiana Superdome, will provide a phone number for scheduling appointments.

In the SBC exhibit hall, LeaderCare representatives will be available with information regarding retreats and other services and resources. LeaderCare wellness consultant Tommy Yessick and Annuity Board representatives will offer ministers and their spouses free cholesterol and osteoporosis screenings, along with assistance in determining their "health age."

"Renewed Confidence for Ministry" is the theme of the annual complimentary luncheon sponsored by LeaderCare and Wounded Ministers during the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference in New Orleans. This year's luncheon will be Monday, June 11, from 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. in the Hyatt Regency Ballroom. Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Church, Dallas, will be the featured speaker.

Tickets, free to the first 1,200 individuals making requests, may be obtained by contacting Kay Russell by e-mail, kay.russell@lifeway.com, or by phone, (615) 251-2173.

JUST FOR THE RECORD

The Singing Echoes and Family Tradition will be in concert March 25, 7 p.m. at Leesburg Church, Morton. For additional information, call (601) 854-5306.

GAs and Acteens (pictured) at Mt. Zion Church (New Hope), Columbus, celebrated an awards ceremony, Missions into the Millennium. GAs, grades 1-3, (from left, first row) are



Younger GAs of Mt. Zion Church, Columbus



Older GAs of Mt. Zion Church, Columbus



Acteens of Mt. Zion Church, Columbus

Brittani Weathers, Mary Kathryn Byrd, Hillary Kinard, Morgan Porter, Brandi Spear; (second row) Lauren Oswalt, Ashleigh White, Alexis Johns, Madison Morgan, Sidney Hurt; (third row) Karen Burnett, Amanda Wall, Jamie Barksdale, Hannah Eaves, and Rachel Taylor.

GAs, grades 4-6, (first row) Brittany Porter, Mallory Johns, Ashley Silas, Mary Jolly; (second row) Katherine Brents, Kacie Hawkins, Kimberly Hollis, Christin Hutchinson, Brittany Kinard; (third row) Katie Bright, Rebecca Jones, Emily Sullivan; (fourth row) Rachel Baucom, Lauren Johns, Susan Slayton, Erin Morrison, and Niccole Silas.

Acteens, grades 7-12, (first row) Dori Vaughan, Beth Hutcheson, Amber Cook; (second row) Brittany Morgan, Whitney Morgan, Sarah Burnett; (third row) Amber Spear, and Leigh Hutcheson.



Library dedication service at Neshoba Church, Union

Library dedication service for the Mattie Mae and Margie D. Viverette Memorial Library was held recently at Neshoba Church, Union. Pictured (from left) are Allen Muse, Allen Boler, Oleta Boler, Muriel Crenshaw, Betty Kelly, Mildred Mott,

Arcola Pilgrim, Rolf Howle, Johnnie Howle, and Jack Mason.

An art exhibit, Reflections of the Creator, will be presented at Main Street Church, Hattiesburg, March 27 at 6:30 p.m. For additional information,

call Steve Bublit, minister of adult singles, at (601) 296-8000.

2001 Missions Garage Sale will be held at Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, on April 6-7, 7 a.m.-3 p.m. Donations are needed. For more information call (601) 924-5620.

First Church of Carnes, Lumberton, will sponsor the first annual spaghetti dinner on March 24, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Proceeds will be divided between Carnes Volunteer Fire Dept. and the youth group at the church for youth camp. For additional information, call Vince Krumbeck, pastor, at (601) 928-5409.

The youth of Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale, set aside a special room for worship and fellowship. The Upper Room was dedicated on Jan. 31. Barry Jemison is youth pastor. Tony Meinhardt is pastor.



Youth of Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale

Senior Adult Celebrations!
2001

Featuring David Jeremiah in Branson!

Featuring Henry Blackaby in Pigeon Forge (week II)

Phil Waldrep
MINISTRIES

www.philwaldrep.org

1-800-475-0819

Branson

MISSOURI

• Oct. 1-4

Pigeon Forge

TENNESSEE

• Oct. 9-12

• Oct. 15-18

• Oct. 22-25

• Oct. 29-Nov. 1

• Nov. 5-8

HISTORIC SBC CHURCH SEEKING SENIOR PASTOR.

Located in a growing suburban/university city of 75,000 with a strong potential for growth. Traditional and contemporary worship combined attendance of 500. We have a diverse outlook on missions giving, adhere to the priesthood of all believers and desire strong lay leadership. We acknowledge the equality of ministry gifts by selecting women as deacons and ministry staff. A qualified applicant must possess a Master's degree or higher from a reputable seminary or divinity school, a minimum of 10 years pastoral experience, a facilitative leadership style and be able to work with a diverse membership, multiple staff, and deacon body. Send resumes with references to: Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 200 E. Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37130. Due date: April 15, 2001. See website for further information: www.fbcmboro.org.

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

March 22, 2001

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Office of Communication.



Missions Fest 2001 Little Rock, Ark. June 24-30, 2001

MissionsFEST is a co-ed event for adults 18+ who have a desire to minister and share their faith with others.

Space is limited!!! The deadline to register with the Miss. WMU is April 24, 2001

For more info, contact the WMU
1-800-748-1651 or 601-968-3800

2001 State Senior Adult Rallies

Emmanuel Baptist Church

GRENADA

Thursday, March 29

8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Special Guests:

Bill Baker, Clinton

Irene Martin, Harpersville

Call church for more info: 662-226-5316

Temple Baptist Church (East)

HATTIESBURG

Monday, April 2

9 - 11:30 a.m.

Special Guests:

Joy Choir, Temple

Milton Scott, Hattiesburg

Mickey Bounds

Cajun Humorist

Call church for more info: 601-544-1794

Refreshments provided by: Mississippi Baptist Foundation
Sponsored by Discipleship and Family Ministry, MBCB

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS TRAINING INSTITUTE



INTRODUCTORY SEMINAR

April 6-7, 2001

FBC, Booneville • FBC, Coldwater

COST: \$15

includes two meals and the latest International Missions Training Institute volunteer orientation manual.

The deadline for registration is March 30, 2001. However, we encourage a prompt response as only 50 seats are available.

For more info:

Phone:

601-939-2182

Fax: 601-936-1493

Sponsored by:
Partnership Missions Dept.
Mississippi Baptist
Convention Board

WMU Annual Meeting New Orleans - June 9-12

Registration Form for Annual Meeting in New Orleans

Must be returned to Miss. WMU office by April 27

Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone: (day) _____ (evening) _____

Church: _____ Association: _____

Room selection: Single / Double / Triple / Quad Amt. Enc. \$ _____

Roommate(s): (1) _____ (2) _____

(3) _____ (4) _____

Select your choice for Saturday: _____ Free time or _____ Ministry Option*

* Participants wishing to be involved in ministry projects will be contacted when their registrations are received to discuss ministry opportunities.

Make checks payable to MBCB and designate for WMU Annual Meeting. Mail to WMU, MBCB, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205. For more info contact Miss. WMU in Jackson at 292-3316 or 1-800-748-1651 or E-mail: tanderson@mbcb.org.

Mississippi WMU State Package includes three nights lodging at the Double Tree Hotel, transportation provided by Jackson Tour and Travel, and WMU, SBC registration fee. Cost per person (due with registration) is: single-\$464; double-\$295; triple-\$250; or quad-\$218.

*"the difference
1
can make"*

Monday May 7 FBC, Booneville 6:30-8:30 p.m.	Monday May 14 FBC, Columbia 6:30-8:30 p.m.
---	--

Sunday School DIRECTORS'

Seminars



CONFERENCE LEADER

Our conference will be led by Wayne Poling, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville. Wayne is a Sunday School/FAITH consultant at LifeWay and has, for many years, shown special interest in Sunday School directors. He has also been instrumental in the National Sunday School Directors' Seminars.

Registration Form

Name: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Address: _____

I serve as Sunday School director
for _____ Baptist Church in
(city) _____

Please complete form and mail to:
Sunday School Department
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
PO Box 530
Jackson MS 39205-0530

For more information call the Sunday School
Department at 968-3800 in Jackson or 1-800-748-1651.

You won't want
to miss this event
as Wayne shares
his heart and
knowledge of the
basics of Sunday
School work. He
will equip you
with the skills to
help your Sunday
School be a founda-
tional strategy
for reaching peo-
ple and building
Great Commission
Christians.

No cost for
this event!

State Singles Leadership Lab

March 30 & 31 Central Hills

Cost: \$30

(includes lodging for one night, three meals and registration)

Conferences:

- Ministers responsible for singles - Karen Gibson
- Singles leadership (includes Sunday School teachers) - Larry Garner, Jackson, singles lecturer and co-author of *Single Solution*
- Associational singles - Glenn Shows, MBCB, singles consultant
- Adventure recreation, ropes course leadership - Ronny Joe Webb, FBC, Laurel
- Includes music, round-table opportunities, rap session and fellowship

Send check to MBCB: c/o Glenn Shows, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205
or call Glenn at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-968-3800

Karen Gibson
Singles
Consultant
Colorado

Think outside the lines! Get outside the walls!

YOUTH BIBLE STUDY: OUTSIDE THE WALLS

March 17, 2001 - FBC, Brandon

March 31, 2001 - FBC, Oxford

May 5, 2001 - FBC, Gulfport

9-11:30 a.m.

- For program information contact Mark Lott, Sunday School Department
(601)292-3295 or 1-800-748-1651

Mississippi Baptist

State Senior Adult Choir Festival

May 8, 2001
Morrison Heights
Baptist Church
Clinton

Registration 8:30 a.m.
Festival Begins 9 a.m.

REGISTRATION FORM 2001 SENIOR ADULT CHOIR FESTIVAL

Church _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Choir Name _____ Choir Director _____

No. Members Attending _____ x \$1= _____

(Make checks payable to Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.)

OUR CHOIR WILL SING THE FOLLOWING SELECTIONS
FOR ADJUDICATION

1. title _____ composer _____
publisher _____

2. title _____ composer _____
publisher _____

Our favorite hymn is _____

☐ OUR CHOIR WILL NOT SING FOR ADJUDICATION.

Please return registration form and registration fees to the
CHURCH MUSIC DEPARTMENT,
Senior Adult Choir Festival, P.O. Box 530,
Jackson, MS 39205 no later than April 23, 2001.

Mississippi Baptist



OLDER CHILDREN'S Bible Drill Camp

July 5-7, 2001

(Boys and girls who have completed grades 3-6)

July 5-7 (cycle 3)

Central Hills Baptist Retreat
Kosciusko, Miss. Cost: \$80



Schedule: Thursday 1:30 p.m. - Registration
Saturday noon - Goodbye

Purpose:

For church groups (with sponsors), whether or not their church has Bible Drill, to participate in personal Bible study, Scripture memorization, Bible skills, worship, time with missionaries, spiritual growth, swimming, horseback riding, rifle range and canoeing.

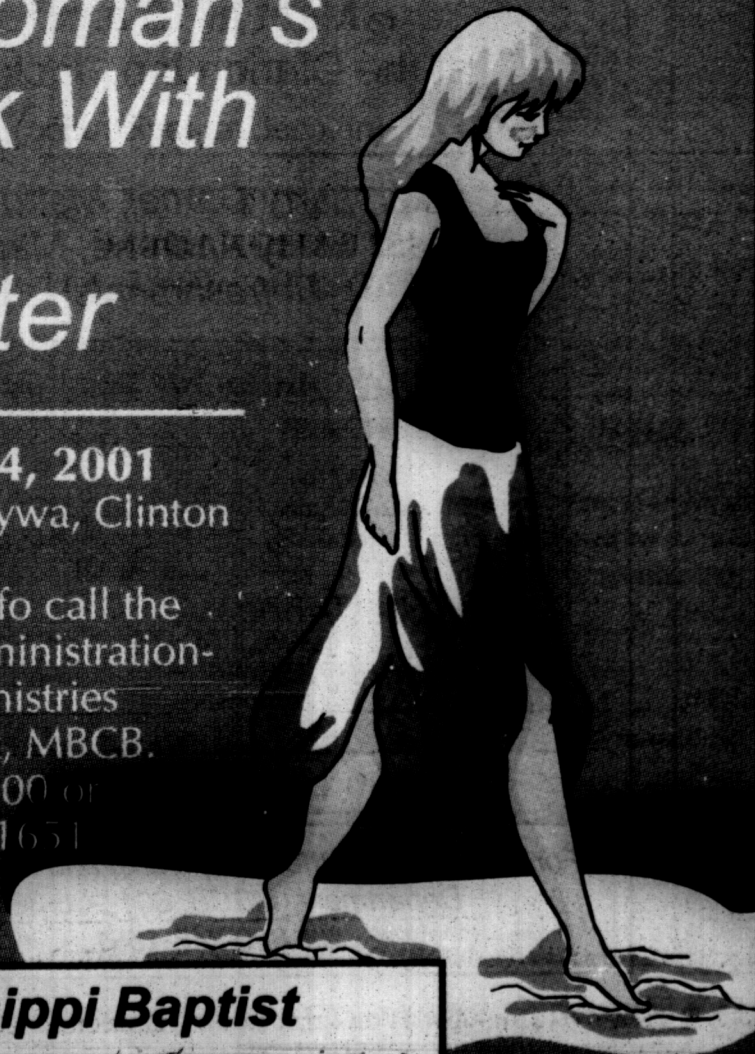
Special policy requires churches to send adult counselors (21 years or older) with groups of young people under 18 years of age. If the group includes both boys and girls, a counselor of the same sex is required for each seven girls (or portion thereof) and for each seven boys (or portion thereof). Counselors will be responsible for the conduct of the children they bring and will participate with them throughout camp.

For more information, contact the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department at 601-968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651.

A Woman's Walk With The Master

April 23-24, 2001
Camp Garaywa, Clinton

For more info call the Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries Department, MBCB.
601-968-3800 or
1-800-748-1651



Mississippi Baptist Secretaries Conference



Pack your bags and get ready for adventure, thrills, and a search for truth!

VBS PREVIEW CLINICS

FBC, WIGGINS - APRIL 9
NORTH OXFORD BC - OXFORD, APRIL 10

8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Cost: \$2.00 - \$3.00

Contact the Sunday School Department for more info:
968-3800 (in Jackson) or 1-800-748-1651

Theme: The Significance of One



April 30 - May 1, 2001
Poplar Springs Drive Baptist Church
Meridian

Featured Preachers and Presenters:

Chuck Allen
Pamela Boucher
Matt Buckles

Dennis Johnsey
Frank Pollard

REGISTRATION FORM

PREACHING AND WORSHIP CONFERENCE

Name _____
Church _____
Position _____
Address _____
City _____ Zip _____
Phone (____) _____ Fax (____) _____
E-mail _____

Please complete form and mail to:
Church Administration - Pastoral Ministries Dept., MBCB,
PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205-0530; or fax (601-714-7426);
or E-mail information to: kmcdonnell@mbcb.org by April 25, so that we might prepare materials.

Call 601-968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651 for more information.

PREACHING AND WORSHIP CONFERENCE

Pray this day for...

March 23 - April 5, 2001

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 601-292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-7729 (PRAY)

If God is your co-pilot, swap seats!

Pray for the adjustments of missionaries Scott and Carolyn Jordan who returned to Esmeraldas, Ecuador, March 4th from stateside assignment. Their oldest daughter is in college in the States. Pray for a church-planting movement to begin among the Chachi people.

March 7-April 15 is a 40-day worldwide movement of prayer for France (only 0.66 evangelical Christians). Pray for the people of French Guiana, the strengthening of the French churches, the unity among believers and the removal of spiritual hindrances in the nation.

Pray for the Bible distribution at the Makande Secondary School and the Ngabu Secondary School in southern Malawi. This distribution is a direct result of a volunteer team of university students from Oklahoma, who worked in this area last June.

The Fulbe Team in Nigeria had hoped to start broadcasting a Christian radio program last January but that hasn't yet been approved. Continue to pray for this radio program, that it will go on the air in God's time and in His location.

For: (1) Cultural Awareness, Mt Olive BC, Hattiesburg, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. (Strategic Missions); (2) Please pray today for President Benjamin William Mkapa of Tanzania (eastern Africa).

A medical ministry in Southeast Asia is being threatened due to a wrongful lawsuit. Please pray that God will reveal the frivolous nature of this case, and it be dropped. Pray for a positive witness to the family who filed the lawsuit, the judge and this community.

A Christian businessman in Valencia, Venezuela, is a lay pastor with a heart for reaching other professionals in this city for Christ. Pray for the 60 people who currently meet in this man's house weekly for worship and Bible study to start a church-planting movement among urban professionals.

For: (1) Baptist Building Staff AT HOME DAYS 4th-6th; (2) A Christian bookstore was opened in a Last Frontier country in January despite threats. Pray for the store manager to be encouraged and that future stock can easily be cleared through customs.

For: (1) Young Pastors Retreat, Camp Garaywa; (Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries); (2) Please pray today for President Bashar al-Assad of Syria (east end of the Mediterranean Sea).

Thank God that in addition to receiving missionaries from the USA, Brazilian Baptists support their own missionary-sending agency. Pray for the 529 missionaries preaching the gospel in 56 different fields, many of which cannot be entered by missionaries from the USA.

For: (1) Christian Performing Arts Festival & Leader Lab, Ridgecrest BC, Madison; (2) Praise God for a secular FM radio station in eastern Cote d'Ivoire that has agreed to play the Anyi Bible story tapes each Sunday morning from 11 a.m. until noon.

For: (1) State Young Ringers Festival, Jackson; (2) Vaughn Holmes is church planter pastor of Maplecrest BC, Perry, N.Y., the only SBC church in the county. Pray God keeps their focus on evangelism and discipleship and for \$6,000 for a baptistry.

For: (1) State Young Musicians Choral Evaluation; (2) State Singles Leadership Retreat; (3) Pray that Christians will pray for, care for and share positive moral and spiritual values with educators and students in our public schools.

For: (1) Youth Bible Study: Outside the Walls; (2) State Young Musicians Choral Festival; (3) Pray for a church-planting movement to begin among the Criollos of Northern Argentina. It will take a minimum of 1,500 churches to see 10 percent of the people saved and discipled.



Take a moment to send a card to encourage the children of our missionaries!

1-89 MR. BRYAN K. HOLYFIELD
C/O UECB OF RUSSIA, INTERNATIONAL POST OFFICE,
P O Box 171, MOSCOW, RUSSIA 101060
Parents: Michael & Patricia Holyfield, Church Planting
SERVE IN Central & Eastern Europe

10-83 MISS KIMBERLY J. HEARON
Rua Sao Caetano 26, Charitas, 24370-160 Niteroi, R.J., BRAZIL
Parents: Thomas & Bonnie Hearon, Student Evangelism, SERVE IN Eastern South America

11-92 MR. ANDREW S. BRASWELL
Caixa Postal 61, 89.802-970 Capeco, SC, BRAZIL
Parents: Larry & Alicia Braswell, General Evangelism, SERVE IN Eastern South America

16-96 MR. MICAH J. PEACOCK
6 GLENHILL CRESCENT, COCHRANE ALBERTA TOL 0W3, CANADA
Parents: Kevin & Brenda Peacock, Theological Education, SERVE IN Middle America

20-88 MR. JOHN R. MCCALL
P O Box 5864, Tanga, TANZANIA
Parents: Dennis & Margaret McCall, Agriculture, SERVE IN Eastern Africa

23-79 ADAM L. GRAVES
SU Box 291550, Birmingham, AL 35229-1550
Parents: Edgar L. & Marilyn L. Graves, General Evangelism, SERVE IN Western South America

24-92 MISS REBEKAH A. HARPER
56 Carlton Green, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 2DA RH2 OFF, UNITED KINGDOM
Parents: Brian & Laura Harper, Community Outreach, SERVE IN Northern Africa & Middle East

24-91 MISS LAURA M. PURL
1009 Northwest Avenue, McComb, MS 39648
Parents: John & Amy Purl, Financial Administration, SERVE IN West Africa

Making a Difference Day! For 20-Something Singles

Sunday, April 29
Meet at 10 a.m.
at the Clarion Inn, Jackson
(no cost, no registration)

Speaker: Larry Garner, Metro Assoc.
Music: Stacy Andrews, Madison
Refreshments

Opportunities for service at

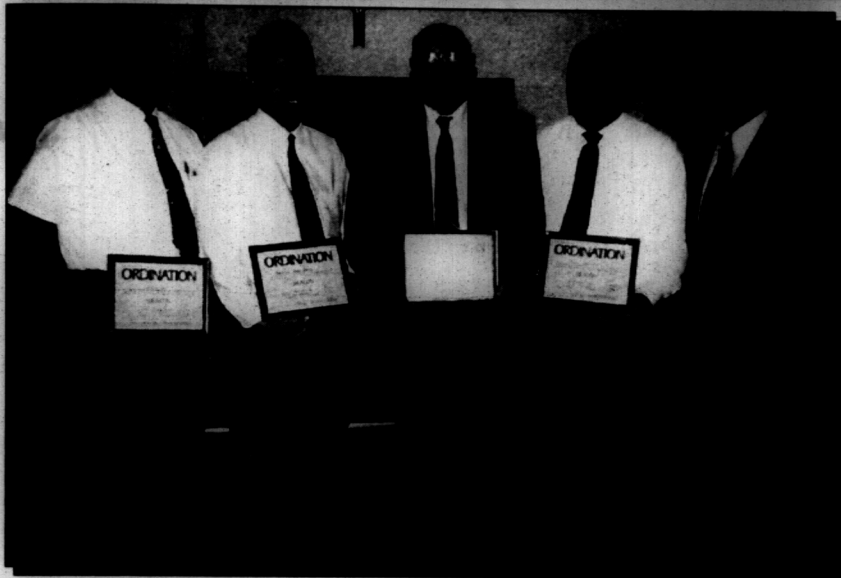
- Gateway
- Stewpot
- Inner city children with Calvary BC, Jackson
- Crestwood
- Sunnybrook

4 p.m. Celebration Service with
Stacy Andrews at the Clarion Inn

For more info call the Discipleship and Family Ministry
Department, MBCB, 601-968-3800 or
1-800-748-1651.

HOUSE TOPS

NAMES IN THE NEWS



Byrd, Sharp, Crabb, Allen, and Worsham

Clear Creek Church, Lamar, ordained Lowrance Byrd, Derrick Sharp, James Crabb, and Roger Allen as deacons on Feb. 4. Pictured (from left) are Byrd, Sharp, Crabb, Allen, and Donald Worsham, pastor.

Cheryl Nelson, Baldwin, attended the National Christian Women's Job Corps Site Coordinators Certification Training, Feb. 22-24. The event, sponsored by the Alabama Woman's Missionary Union,

was held at the Alabama Baptist State Convention Building, Montgomery.

Steve Walker, music evangelist, Pinola, will be in concert at Fairfield Church, Moselle, March 25, at 6:30 p.m. Kenny Goff is pastor.

Lester Jeffers is available for pulpit supply and interim. He can be contacted at #64 Front St., Philipp, MS 38950; call (662) 658-1165 (home) or (662) 453-9408 (work).

Mt. Carmel Church, Edinburg, recently recognized David "Jr." Wilkinson for service rendered

as a deacon. Wilkinson, rotating off at this time, was recognized for his years of service. Pictured (from left) are Wm. Keith Fulton, pastor; Wilkinson; Sybil Wilkinson; Burnette Webb; and Laston Webb, chairman of deacons.

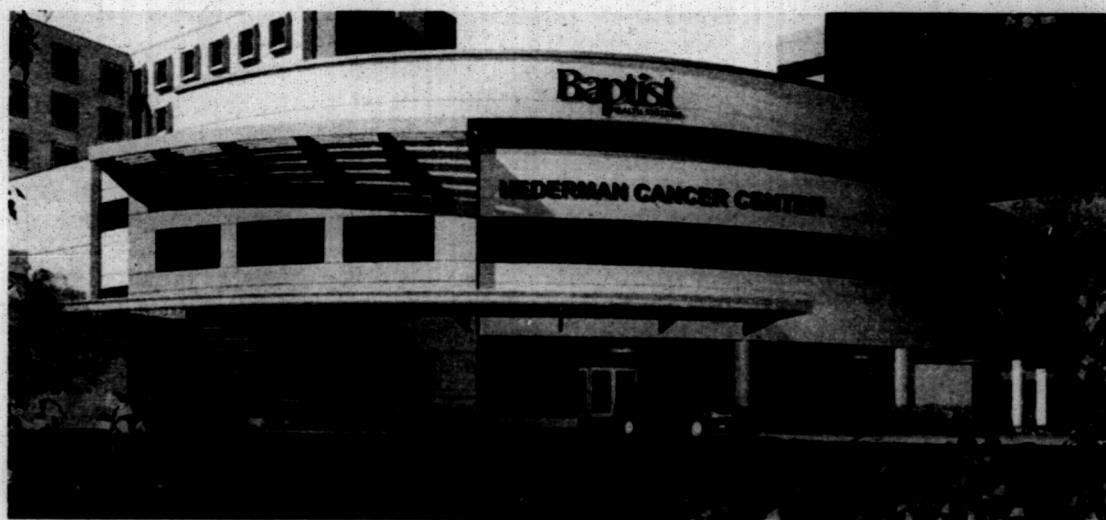


Fulton, D. Wilkinson, S. Wilkinson, B. Webb, and L. Webb

TRUST
The Foundation for Baptist Health Systems

Honor or Memorialize Someone You Care About

And help build a new Cancer Center at Baptist



Baptist Health Systems is launching a new attack on cancer. In recent weeks, many individuals and corporations have made financial commitments to help build the Hederman Cancer Center at Baptist. With a goal of \$10,000,000, your help is needed.

With the construction of the Cancer Center, Baptist's enhanced services will provide even better treatment for the medical needs of patients in Mississippi and beyond. Through your gift, you can help in offering patients the most advanced and complete cancer care center in the area.

Honor or memorialize a pastor, a parent, a child, a spouse, a friend

Pay tribute to someone you care about and do a tremendous favor for the community as well. For a gift of \$250 or more, your name or the name of whomever you honor or memorialize will be listed on the wall in the Commons, the lobby of the new Cancer Center. You will also receive a gold-encased TRUST coin in appreciation. Gifts of all sizes are welcomed and appreciated.

I want to make a gift in the amount of \$ _____

My Name _____

My Address _____

My gift is in (memory/honor) of _____

Please acknowledge _____

Address _____

Your gift is tax-deductible. Make checks payable to The TRUST and mail with this form to the TRUST at Baptist Health Systems, 1225 N. State Street, Jackson, MS 39202. The TRUST is the Foundation for Baptist Health Systems.

For more information, call 601-968-1489 or email ljones@mbmc.org. • Visit our website at www.mbhs.org/thetrust

Easter specials scheduled on FamilyNet

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — The FamilyNet television network, a subsidiary of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, has announced a comprehensive lineup of specials for the Easter 2001 season. All air times are Eastern Standard Time.

◆ He Chose the Nails, with Max Lucado. Airs March 29 at 9 p.m., March 30 at 2 a.m., April 7 at 10 p.m., April 11 at 8 p.m., April 14 at 1 a.m., and also April 14 at noon.

◆ In Francesco's Freindly World: The Last Stone, Francesco and his animal friends work together to repair the church before Easter morning. Airs April 3 at 4 p.m.; April 4 at 5 p.m.; April 7 at 9 a.m.; April 11 at 4 p.m.; April 12 at 9 p.m.; April 13 at 2 a.m.

◆ The Quest takes viewers to the Holy Land. Airs April 3 at 5 a.m., April 13 at 5 a.m., April 13 at 9 p.m., and April 19 at 2 a.m.

◆ The Promise, a musical drama based on the life of Christ. Airs April 6 at 4 a.m., April 14 at 4 a.m., and April 14 at 10 a.m.

◆ The Life of Christ features a 300-voice choir. Airs April 3 at 4 a.m., April 11 at 2 a.m., and April 13 at 4 p.m.

◆ The First Easter, an animated family special. Airs April 2 at 5 p.m., April 5 at 5 a.m., April 13 at 5 p.m., and April 14 at 9 a.m.

◆ The Wall is a dynamic drama in which two prisoners agonize in their prison cell in the early hours of Good Friday as they wait to be crucified. Airs April 5 at 4 a.m., April 13 at 4 a.m., and April 14 at 3 p.m.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

ASHAMED OF CROSS

Editor:

Why are we ashamed of the old rugged cross? When I was a little girl, we used to sing in church about the old rugged cross. We sang of our love for the cross. We sang of the beauty of the cross and about how we would cherish and cling to this emblem. We sang of its glory and how we would forever be true to the cross. We also sang of how the old rugged cross is despised by the world. When did we Christians become ashamed of the cross?

Now the Supreme Court says we can't place the Ten Commandments in the classroom because some child might read them, believe them, and follow them. Principals are arrested for allowing prayer in school. We went to our local school recently to pray before a football game and were not even allowed into the stadium. We had to stand outside on the streets, but we prayed anyway. Blacks and

whites alike, we stood on the street outside the stadium, held hands, and prayed for our children, our school, and our nation. I pray for a moral revolution in our country.

How many more of our religious freedoms have to be taken from us before Christians will again stand up and say, "I'm proud of the Cross. I love Jesus. I'm not ashamed to be called a Christian."

Let's put prayer back in our schools. Let's put the Ten Commandments in our hearts and teach them to our children and talk about them to our neighbors (Deut. 6:6-9) and let's vote on April 17 to keep the St. Andrew Cross in our flag.

Sharon Fortner Wright
Marks

ANOTHER COMPLAINT

Editor:

"Victims" have launched another complaint that has no core substance. This time it's

against the state flags of Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina.

The Stars and Bars flag of the Confederate States of America represented an independent nation of which Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina were members. It did not represent slavery anymore than the Union Stars and Stripes did.

Southern states seceded from the Union because of economics and abuse of States Rights by the federal government. Slavery was not an issue.

Proponents who want to change our flag say they are offended by it. China, Iran, Iraq, Cuba, Libya, Pakistan, and Russia have beautiful flags. Maybe one of these would be more to their liking. Bon voyage.

Our state flag represents a part of our heritage and has served us well for 100-plus years and will continue to do so if these proponents use their time to promote racial harmony and to eliminate slavery in any form worldwide.

Those who use the Stars and Bars flag to promote hate and

racism do not represent the majority of Mississippians.

Money spent for this election would be better spent to further our children's education.

Kenneth R. Rowe
Charleston

ALMOST COMICAL

Editor:

I just had the opportunity to read an article that was written by Jimmy Porter that was published in The Baptist Record dated Feb. 1. I would have almost found the article quite comical had I not been so personally insulted and "offended." The part I found funny was Porter's statement informing the readers that he "is not going to tell us how to vote," when in all actuality that is exactly what he is trying to do. I am insulted and "offended" that he thinks that I, or any other reader, would be so naive as to believe otherwise. It is most obvious

continued on page 9

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

Mississippi College (MC) chemistry students, Melissa Bagwell, Eupora; Karen Hand, Meridian; Tyler Smith, Forest; John Cooper, Brandon; and Stephen Miller, Winter Garden, Fla., participated in the 21st Undergraduate Research Conference at the University of Memphis on March 3. The students presented their undergraduate research projects under the direction of the faculty at MC. Miller's presentation won the Schering-Plough award for the best presentation in Organic Chemistry.

Mississippi College has announced the second annual vocal competition for the Bethea-Claxton Award. The event will be held in Swor Auditorium on April 3 at 7:30 p.m. Gerald Claxton, who retired in May 2000, after serving 40 years on the Mississippi College voice faculty, and Ann Bethea, a friend of Mississippi College, established this competition, with its cash award of \$2,000, in the Spring of 2000.

Mississippi College (MC) has made plans to host high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors for Preview Day, March 23. Special events have been planned to enable high school students to participate in the "Mississippi College Experience." The open-

ing session will begin at 8:30 a.m. in the Grand Hall West of the B. C. Rogers Student Center. At 11 a.m., a special event will be a performance by the "Naturals," a MC show troupe. There will be a complimentary noon lunch provided by the college. The final event of the day will be campus tours which will be conducted for the students and their parents from 1 to 1:30 p.m. For more information, call the admissions office at (601) 925-3800 or (800) 738-1236.

Mississippi College (MC) chapter, Omicron Lambda, will be inducting 19 nursing students, six community leaders from the Jackson area, and five international community leaders from Chile. Induction ceremonies will be held at MC at B. C. Rodgers, Grand Hall East, on April 24, at 6 p.m. The keynote speaker will be President Patricia E. Thompson, RN, EdD, associate dean for baccalaureate education and professor at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Nursing. Students to be inducted: Abumere F. Adedeji, Lori B. Cockrell, Rebekah C. Carter, Emily Drobny, J. Leigh Fitch, Amy R. Haskins, Amanda L. Hurt, Lydia B. Lofton, M. Jane Masters, Rachel R. Morris, Jessie B. Partridge, Kimberly D. Pierce, Devin L. Salley,

Jacqueline Stepp, Elizabeth R. Totty, Jana A. Welch, Amy E. Whittington, Amy M. Wheat, Bryan H. Williamson, Rita C. Beasley, Valeria C. Abell, Julia R. Castill, Patricia B. Crockett, Marilyn Graves, Helen W. Warren, Patricia B. Clemen, Margrett R. Davis, Roxanna E. Quinteros, Voren Tea, and Tarshe Mac.

Mississippi College Office of Continuing Education will be offering Eight Secrets to Getting a Killer Job, a one-night non-credit class to be held April 5, 6-8 p.m. Topics to be covered include: Overcoming Entry-Level Resume-itis; Making Your Resume Jump Out of the Stack; How to Find the Un-advertised Jobs; Surviving the New Behavioral Interviews; Building Your Advertising Package; and Power Networking for the 2000s. Pre-registration is required by

March 30. For more information, call (601) 925-3264 or e-mail at continuing-ed@mc.edu.

Mississippi College Office of Continuing Education will be offering How to Outclass the Competition, a noncredit class on business etiquette and dining skills. The class will meet for three Tuesday nights, 6-8:30 p.m., beginning April 10. The class will be held in the B.C. Rogers Student Center. This course will include a reference workbook. A tutorial dinner, which will allow participants to practice the techniques that were covered and reinforce what has been learned in a practical setting, will be served on the last evening of the course. Pre-registration is required by April 3. For more information, call (601) 925-3264 or e-mail at continuing-ed@mc.edu.



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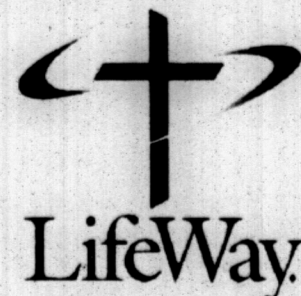
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continued from page 8

what his opinion is regarding the threatened abolishment of our beloved state flag.

First of all, the Scripture that Porter refers to is not a commandment. This was Paul's own personal choice of what actions he should take in a particular situation, not the spoken word of God. If he chooses to interpret the Scriptures to fit this particular situation, please let me remind you that there are many people in the State of Mississippi who are greatly "offended" by the proposal to change a flag that represents our history and heritage and, many of these people, like myself and family, are Southern Baptists who help support this organized religion! Perhaps Porter forgot this while in his endeavor to be considered politically correct.

Sheila R. Ford
Bay Springs

NOT GULLIBLE

Editor:

I just had the most unpleasant opportunity to read an article that was written by Jimmy Porter and printed in The Baptist Record on Feb. 1. I am a board certified physician currently employed at Rankin Medical Center. I assure you sir, that I did not successfully complete a difficult medical program followed by an intense, stressful residency

by being gullible, ingenious, and naive, which is exactly what a person would have to be in order to believe Porter's statement regarding his intent "to not tell us how to vote" in relation to the state flag issue. If his intent was to avoid "offending" a "fellow brother in Christ," then his effort, to say the least, was quite pathetic.

Perhaps the Texas Southern Baptist Association is on to something. I will certainly not be dropping my hard-earned money into the treasury of an organization whose leaders think that my beloved wife is not fit nor capable to minister the Word of God, yet their leaders quite obviously and openly denounce the flag of the Great State of Mississippi in an effort to satisfy the likes of Jessie Jackson and his horde of righteous followers! I now feel that I would just as well tithe 10% of my income to the NAACP as to any organization in support of the Southern Baptist Association. How naive Porter must be to assume that this proposed change would actually appease the NAACP.

Terry D. Ford
Bay Springs

REWRITING WORD?

Editor:

After reading an article which was printed in The Baptist Record on Feb. 1, I felt the need to pen

this letter to you. I am referring to the article written by Jimmy Porter concerning the issue of the proposed change to our state flag. First of all, Porter's stated attempt to not instruct me "as to how to vote" was a failure, to say the least. Any rational person can clearly see how Porter wishes his readers to vote. His interpretation of the Scriptures give him away.

I am not a white robe clad Klan member nor have I ever been. I am a Christian woman in her sixties who reared her children to respect and love everyone no matter what their race. However, I also taught them to stand for what is right and it is not right to give in to a group of people who only wish to continue "racial tension." Does Porter actually think that changing our flag will satisfy the opposition? Absolutely not!

Unfortunately, I believe these are only people who wish to seek attention in the eyes of man while "offensively" attempting to strip me of my ancestry. I do not believe that God considers me wrong for standing up for my history and heritage even at the expense of "offending" liberal-minded people who in their quest to be considered politically correct, attempt to rewrite history as well as the Word of God.

Mona Ruth Rutledge
Soso

UNIQUE IRONY

Editor:

As we vote on a new state flag on April 17, we need to be aware that there is a unique irony in this particular election.

The irony is that a vote for the old flag will be a vote to help raise the power and stature of racists such as Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton! Let the new flag be defeated and these two will have an arsenal of ammunition to promote their race-baiting tactics. So if you want to help Jackson and Sharpton and others like them

promote their racism, vote for the old flag. If you want to help silence their racially charged rhetoric, vote for the new flag. A vote for the old flag, while not intended, will have the practical effect of helping those promoting racism. A vote for the new flag will help silence the racists and be a giant step toward reconciliation.

I think most Mississippians are like me — they treat people as individuals regardless of race. We should always be sensitive to the feelings of others. For those of us who are not black, it is hard to identify with the feelings of black people.

What message will be send to our black friends, neighbors, fellow church members, co-workers and to their children who share this state with us, if we retain the old flag? Compare that with the message we send if we vote for the new flag.

Donald E. Wildman, pres.
American Family Assoc.
Tupelo

CRITICISM UNFAIR

Editor:

As usual, in any "conversation" between Catholics and Baptists, the latter come off as dumb and mean. Unkind the Southern Baptists are not; unwise they are indeed. For instance, Baptists never seem to learn that in this particular debate they should aim their biggest guns of public criticism, not against Catholic soteriology, but against its ecclesiology: targeting the Catholic system of government as a centralizing dictatorship (e.g. Catholics aren't allowed to vote on their own priests or govern their own local affairs) versus the Baptist churches' congregationalist democracies (e.g. Baptists routinely elect their own preacher, govern themselves freely and secede frequently).

The vast distinction between Catholic-style dictatorship versus Baptist-style democracy is ripe for fostering good national-media "P.R." for Baptists but they never capitalize on it.

Bob Craig
Myrtle



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Staff changes

First Church, Summit, has called **Bradley L. White** as minister of music, associate pastor, and music/senior adults, effective Feb. 5. A native of Columbia, White received his education at William Carey College and New Orleans Seminary. He previously served at Salem Church, Tylertown. Jerry L. Smith is pastor.

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EXPERIENCED MINISTER OF EDUCATION is seeking a bi-vocational role in a South Mississippi church. For further information or to request resume, please call Minister of Education at (601) 271-7962 after 5:30 p.m. please.

CUSTOMIZED SMOKIES/WHITE-WATER RETREATS. Contact Dave Heflin, veteran Delta State Wilderness Recreator, (601) 739-3707, Louin.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/MINISTER NEEDED. Resumes are being received for the Executive Director/Minister position of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists. All resumes must be received by April 30, 2001. Send resumes or direct inquiries to: Ken Stidham, Good Shepherd Baptist Church, 15 Scott Lane, Scott Depot, WV 25560. Phone (304) 757-7621.

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FULL-TIME FINANCIAL SECRETARY. Raymond Baptist Church, Raymond, Miss. Computer experience a must, knowledge of Shelby system beneficial. Fax resume to (601) 857-0931.

POSITION AVAILABLE - full-time minister of music and youth. Housing available. Thirty minutes away from Memphis. Send resume to Slayden Baptist Church, 2534 Highway 72, Lamar, MS 38642 or call (662) 252-4559 or (662) 252-4520; fax (662) 252-5248; e-mail sbchurch@dixie-net.com.

TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH, FULTON, MISS., is seeking a full-time minister of music and youth. Send resume to Ministerial Staff Search Committee, Trinity Baptist Church, P.O. Box 638, Fulton, MS 38843. For more information call the church at (662) 862-9320.

ADULT/YOUTH MUSIC DIRECTOR needed for Good Hope Baptist Church. Duties include leading the adult and youth choirs and youth activities. Paid salary. Please send resume to: Good Hope Baptist Church, 1541 Good Hope Road, Batesville, MS 38606 or call (662) 563-3894.

TRACE RIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH is accepting resumes for the position of Senior Pastor. Please forward your resume to Trace Ridge Baptist Church, Attn: Beverly King, P.O. Box 2726, Ridgeland, MS 39158.

LMCO goals exceeded

First Church, Terry, exceeded its goal of \$12,000 for the Lottie Moon Offering by giving a final total of \$12,050.20. John Pace is pastor.

New Hope Church, Webster County, exceeded its Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal. The goal was \$5,000 and the total gift received was \$7,100. Bernette Fielder is pastor.

Canadian Seminary receives accreditation

COCHRANE, Alberta, Canada (BP) — The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) has granted full accreditation to the Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary.

"This is a great day for the seminary," President Richard Blackaby said. "It signifies that our fellow seminaries across North America have recognized that the education we offer is at a high standard of excellence."

ATS is the accrediting body of 200-plus graduate-level theological schools across Canada and the United States, including the six Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) seminaries in the

United States. The accrediting process involves an extensive self-study by the candidate institution followed by an on-site evaluation by an ATS review committee. Based on the committee's findings, ATS' Commission on Accrediting may either grant approval for degree programs for a period of three to five years or deny the request.

Bill Falkner, academic dean of the Canadian seminary, said, "It is rare for an institution to be granted full accreditation for the maximum period of time. Yet by God's grace we were granted approval for the full five years without any notations." ATS may list a notation if there is some institutional deficiency found by the commission. ATS' notification of full accreditation was received by the seminary in February.

The Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary was begun with the help of the SBC International Mission Board in 1987 and is the only seminary of the Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists.

The seminary is located 15 miles west of Calgary overlooking the town of Cochrane and the Rocky Mountains.

Enrollment at the seminary broke the 100 mark for the first time last fall, a 55% increase over the previous year.

Approximately 150 churches are affiliated with the Canadian convention. Last year the convention launched a vision to plant 1,000 churches across Canada by the year 2020.

"Our greatest need to reach 1,000 churches is leadership,"

said Gerry Taillon, national ministry leader of the Canadian convention. "Our seminary is strategic in helping us reach that goal by training ministers to be effective church planters and pastors."

Blackaby noted, "The most significant aspect of the ATS report was it highlighted the

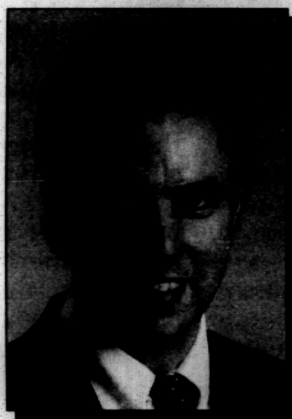
fact that the seminary's greatest strength is it is so committed to our denomination's mission."

Despite the school's small size and relatively young age, the seminary has begun training by correspondence and extension courses in Vancouver and Ottawa.

The seminary can be contact-

ed at (877) 922-2727 or, via the Internet, at www.csbs.edu.

"The recent full accreditation by ATS is astounding and, of course, God-endorsing for this seminary," commented Canada native Henry Blackaby, author of the popular "Experiencing God" discipleship course and other publications.



Blackaby



NORTH OF THE BORDER — Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary, now with 100-plus students, has been granted full accreditation by the Association of Theological Schools. (BP photo)

Homecoming

Carrollton Church,
Carrollton: March 25; worship service, 10:45 a.m.; covered dish lunch; special music in afternoon by present and former members; Gene Henderson, speaker; Duane Jensen, pastor.

REVIVAL DATES

Harmony, Brookhaven: March 23-25; Friday and Saturday, 7 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.; Tommy Hicks, Hammond, La., evangelist; Tom and Willa Moak, Brookhaven, music; Clarence E. Young, interim pastor.

Crooked Creek, Silver Creek: March 25-30; Sunday, 11 a.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Dennis Allen, Bogalusa, La., evangelist; Kenny White, Columbia, music; Robert Dunn, interim pastor.

Cason (Monroe): March 25-28; Sunday, 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Bill Wages, Corinth, evangelist; Tony Summerford, music; Sammy McMillen, pastor.

New Sardis, Mt. Olive: March 25-28; Sunday, 10:45 a.m. followed by noon meal and 1:15 p.m. service; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Scott Walters, missions director, Smith Association, evangelist; Steve Walker, Pinola, music; James Garner, pastor.

First of Carnes, Lumberton: youth revival; March 29-31; 6:30 p.m.; speakers are Marcus Kelly, Dixie Church, Thursday; Mark Farris, Petal, Friday; and Craig Routon, Petal, Saturday; Vince Krumbeck, pastor.

Farmhaven, Canton: March 23-25; Friday and Saturday, 7 p.m.; Sunday, 10:45 a.m., lunch, and 6 p.m.; Kermit McGregor, Mendenhall, evangelist; Graham Smith, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, music; Charles Gentry, pastor.

Brewer, Richton: youth revival; March 23-25; Friday and Saturday, 7 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Troy Hobson and the youth group from Salem Heights Church, Laurel, will lead revival.

Second, Calhoun City: April 8-11; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), evangelist; Mon.-Wed., L. Graham Smith, director, church music department, MBCB, music; Carl Morris, pastor.

Calvary, Louisville: March 25-28; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Stewart Moody, Statesboro, Ga., evangelist; Chuck Moody, pastor.

Scotland, Winona: March 25-28; Sunday, 10:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Thomas Foy, Memphis, Tenn., evangelist; Joe Styron, Kilmichael, music; Gregg Woodard, pastor.

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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Giving my all

John 6:1-13

By Lori Clendinning

A farmer planted a garden to feed his large family. To each of his seven children he assigned one row of vegetables. John tended the corn, Mary, the tomatoes. Bob and Bill were responsible for the beans and carrots. The three youngest girls kept watch over the potatoes, onions, and celery. Time passed and a bounty of vegetables was harvested.

One by one, the children brought their vegetables to the farmer. Each was told that their vegetable would be the highlight of the evening's meal. Somehow, they all misunderstood and believed it strange that Father would serve only their one vegetable to feed the family that night. "A meal of celery?" thought one. "Only onions?" thought another.

Sure enough, when they arrived at the dinner table they discovered one pot in the center of the table.

The father carefully lifted the lid and a sumptuous aroma permeated the room. The children, each anticipating their own vegetable inside, were delighted to discover that their father had chopped and blended each vegetable with the others to create a delicious vegetable soup.

In the same way, our Heavenly Father is like this wise farmer. He gives each of us specific tasks to accomplish and provides us with the talents and abilities to carry out these assignments. Although often we approach him with our heads hung, apologizing that we are not able to do what the Christian next to us does,



Clendinning

he lovingly reminds us that we are to focus on doing the task that he called us to do.

Amazingly, God can take our singular offering and multiply it to its greatest strength by blending it with others' abilities and talents. Although the results are miracles in themselves, the true miracle is that he chooses to use whatever we offer to him for his glory.

Yet, we often make excuses: "Just don't ask me to pray out loud 'cause I can't pray up there in front of folks," or "I can't do the job. I'm just not a teacher" (singer, piano player, V.B.S. director, nursery worker, etc.), or "I can't give to the building fund like So-and-So can; my little bit just won't make a difference."

Nonsense! Lift the lid off this week's lesson and see what God cooked up with just a little boy's lunch.

John 6:1-13 records that Jesus had spent the day ministering to people's spiritual and

medical needs, and was now concerned about their physical hunger.

Jesus turned directly to Philip, a disciple not recorded as having sought out Jesus for one-on-one interviews, asking him, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" (v. 5). Philip, having grown up in the Bethsaida district where this event probably took place, knew that the disciples didn't have enough money to feed everyone: "Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!" (v. 7).

Imagine the disappointment Christ felt. Although having performed miracles before Philip and the other disciples, this "test" (v. 6) confirmed that the pupil had not yet learned what the master had been teaching them.

Likewise, Andrew's response was discouraging, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" (v. 9).

Jesus took what was offered:

a little boy's sack lunch, prepared lovingly by a caring mother and, after blessing it, turned it into a miraculous feast for thousands with basketfuls leftover. Everyone was satisfied and nothing was left to waste.

Consider the mother who prepared the lunch. Perhaps she was too overwhelmed with time-consuming homemaking and mothering duties to attend the day-long conference, but she made sure that her little lad would not go hungry. She had no clue that morning when she put together those little barley loaves and the two sardine-like fish that her task was going to impact so many lives. Imagine her surprise when he burst through the door that night, declaring what "me and Jesus did today."

Isn't that the attitude that we must take? "Here is what I have. Use it, Lord, to bless the one, the few, or the thousands for your glory."

Clendinning is a former newspaper editor and a member of Park Place Church, Pearl.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Renewal

1 Samuel 4:1-7:17

By Jim Burnett

Do you ever feel your life is one big rut getting deeper by the week? Everything you attempt goes awry. Agitating habits of sin gnaw at your joy. You seem to be running on fumes emotionally and physically.

If you answered yes to these questions, you are not alone. All of God's children at one time or another go through seasons of staleness and frustration. It is then we need the fresh touch of God upon our lives. It is then we need spiritual renewal.

Divided loyalties (7:3). Israel had forgotten that God was a jealous God who had a zero tolerance for idols and the worship of other gods.

Unfortunately, it took the loss of the Ark of the Covenant, the loss of at least 34,000 men, and twenty years of Philistine domination before Israel realized their sin of divided loyalties. They finally understood the correlation between their pagan worship and God's judgment on their lives.

When we let things distract us from our relationship with Jesus, a collision is imminent. The sonar plotter of the nuclear attack submarine USS Greeneville — the sub that collided with and sank a Japanese fishing boat recently — knows the importance of undivided loyalty. He allowed civilians aboard to distract him from plotting, and his divided loyal-



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ty perhaps cost nine Japanese their lives.

What a painful lesson to learn. Divided loyalties are expensive in all areas of life, but especially in the spiritual realm. As God's people we must keep our eyes riveted on Jesus. We must use every circumstance God sends our way to be renewed and become more devoted to our Lord.

Spiritual renewal (7:4-6). If you ever need a visual aid for repentance, just turn to these passages. Israel responded to Samuel's invitation to repent. They did a 180-degree turn around. The people moved from paganism and pluralism to worshipping God alone. Immediately upon their repentance, a fresh move of God took place. The people were spiritually revived.

God never promises to bless or use dirty, sinful vessels — but he can and will use Christians who are consecrated and committed.

When we humble ourselves before the Lord, God will come into our midst and bring refreshment to our dry souls and spirits. Prayer, confession, and repentance are the avenues to humility.

Immediate opposition (7:7). As Israel assembled to repent before the Lord, the Philistines interpreted it as a declaration of war. They prepared to attack God's people. That continues to be Satan's strategy today.

Anytime the Church gets serious about living for Jesus, it can expect and should prepare for satanic attack. When God's people begin witnessing to those without Christ, the devil and his demons will actively and aggressively oppose them.

When a congregation goes on mission with God, it becomes an archenemy of Satan but rest assured God will use opposition to make us stronger, bolder, and better soldiers in his army.

So don't back up or back down when Satan comes with

his threats. Step forward in the power of the Spirit and claim new ground for the Lord.

Opposition will come to those who are bent on doing God's will. Just study the life of the prophets, Jesus, and the apostles for proof of this.

Divine help (7:8-13). Israel was afraid of the Philistines, so Samuel prayed for God's intervention. He sacrificed a lamb and cried out to God on behalf of the Israelites. God answered Samuel's prayers and routed the Philistines via divine thunder. That day Israel overcame Philistine domination.

What is bringing defeat to your life? Could you use some divine help? Perhaps it is a habit you can't overcome, or an ungodly attitude lodged in your heart. Maybe it is an unforgiving spirit resonating in your soul.

Whatever is your problem, obstacle, or foe, God can and will rush to your assistance, if you will let him.

Burnett is pastor of Raymond Road Church, Jackson.

Guide for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Church of Jackson, Mississippi, is seeking news and photographs for its monthly newsletter. The newsletter is published by the church and is a valuable resource for the community. We are looking for news items, photographs, and other information that will be of interest to our members and the community. Please submit your contributions to the church office.

THE BAPTIST CHURCH OF JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI



YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!
Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.
(I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.
(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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ERH LI WEMH YRXS XLIQ,
M QYWX TVIEGL XLI
OMRKHSQ SJ KSH XS
SXLIV GMXMIW EPWS, JSV
XLIVISVI EQ M WIRX.

RYOI JSYV: JSVXC-XLVII

Clue: Q = M

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John One: Twenty-Nine.

Fire doesn't send church's spirit up in smoke

PENSACOLA, Fla. (BP) — When the cooks arrived to prepare the deacons' breakfast March 3, smoke had engulfed the two-story educational building of Bellview Church, Pensacola, Fla. Quickly, someone went down the block to summon the fire department and find the pastor, Greg McBride.

The blaze destroyed all the church offices and heavy smoke damaged the classrooms. Authorities believe that someone broke into the property and poured gasoline around the office equipment around 5:30 a.m. to start the fire. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the FBI, and agents of the State Fire Marshall's Office are investigating. McBride said several leads are being checked, but he knows of no motive for the arson.

McBride and his congregation held worship services the next morning in the sanctuary without electricity.

"We must be doing

something right because problems come when you are. The devil wants to slow us down," McBride said. The church also runs a daycare center. The 100 children moved to

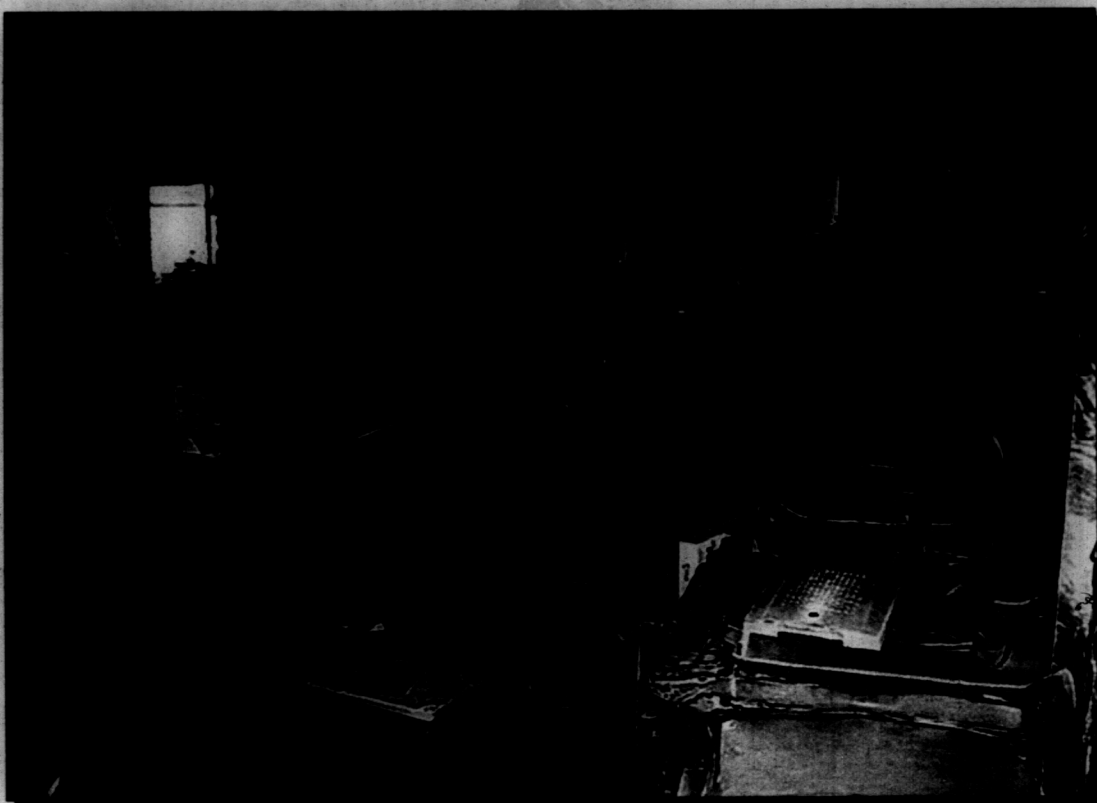
the gymnasium during this first week of operation after the fire.

"This has rallied our church," the pastor said. "We have a strong building and grounds committee who have had to step up to the plate."

The building was insured for more than \$600,000, McBride said.

"My office is my vehicle," he said. He is hopeful that someone or some group can provide temporary space so that things can get back to normal for the 600-member congregation. He also lost his entire library of books.

When asked if he had any advice for other congregations or individuals going through this kind of loss he said, "Just stay close to God. The devil wants to turn everything around when you are doing something right. I ask that people pray for our church to unite and that our church would have a forgiving heart."



ARSON — Damage from a March 3 arson fire claimed the offices of Bellview Church, Pensacola, Fla. Undaunted, the church continues to hold services without electricity in an undamaged portion of the building. (BP photo by Michael E. Atkisson)

Chinese bid for '08 Olympics drawing opposition

WASHINGTON (BP) — A campaign against Beijing's bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games has been launched by the Center for Religious Freedom at the Washington-based religious liberty organization Freedom House.

The campaign's appeal to the International Olympic Committee is being waged "on the basis that China is a severe religious persecutor," according to a statement by the center received by Baptist Press March 14.

The Olympic Committee will meet in Beijing in April to view the facilities there, the statement said, noting that four other cities also are in the running to host the Games: Toronto, Paris, Osaka, and Istanbul. The Olympic Committee's decision will be made in July.

"No religious group operating outside government control in China is spared harsh repression by authorities," the Center for Religious Freedom's statement said. "Unauthorized" Roman Catholics, Protestants, Tibetan Buddhists, Muslims, and practitioners of Falun Gong are all targeted.

"Hundreds of Chinese dissidents and relatives of political prisoners, both inside and outside China, are circulating their own petitions against China's Olympic bid, and the International Olympic Committee policy does not preclude considering such protests," the Center for Religious Freedom said.

Individuals may address

concerns to the International Olympic Committee, Chateau de Vidy, Case Postale 356, 1007 Lausanne, Switzerland; telephone, 41-21-621-61-11; fax, 41-21-621-62-16.

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